THE MIGHTY QUINN: Rev. Pat Bumgardner congratulates Christine Quinn on her election as Speaker of the City Council (the city's second most powerful job after the Mayor) as 450 activists celebrated Quinn's victory at the LGBT Community Center on Jan. 25th. Speaker Quinn is the first out LGBT person to hold such a high office in NYC. Over the years Councilmember Quinn and Rev. Pat have participated in social justice protests together—they were jailed in the past for the "crime" of daring to set foot on Fifth Avenue as out lesbians during Manhattan's St. Patrick's Parade.
*(Picture courtesy of professional photographer **DOUG MESZLER**)*

At 3 p.m. on **Holy Saturday, April 15th**, MCCNY will hold its annual Easter Banquet in the grand refectory at Union Theological Seminary (Broadway at 121st Street). **Rev. Elder Troy Perry**, Founder and retired Moderator of the worldwide, predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination, will be in attendance. Tickets are $50 and are available by calling the church office (212 629-7440). There will be entertainers and presentations of awards to LGBT community leaders including **State Senator Tom Duane**. He is the prime sponsor of bills on everything from legalizing same-sex marriage to protecting all students from harassment and bullying in schools. It was a breakthrough when Tom Duane was elected to the City Council in 1991 (some 18 years after the first openly LGBT candidate, Jim Owles, ran for the seat) and again in 1998 when Tom's election to the State Senate made him the highest-ranking out LGBT person in New York history.

Holy Week at MCCNY

Wednesday, April 12th at 7pm . . . . . **Taize Service** with Rev. Edgard

Holy Thursday, April 13th at 7pm . . . . . **Footwashing Liturgy and Annointment Service**

Good Friday, April 14th at 7pm . . . . . **Stations of the Cross**
The Rev. Troy Perry, Founder of MCC, preaching • Lavender Light Gospel Choir, singing

Holy Saturday, April 15th at 3pm . . . . . **Annual Easter Banquet**
Union Theological Seminary, Refectory

Holy Saturday at 7pm . . . . . **Easter Vigil Liturgy**
The Rev. Troy Perry, preaching • Lighting of the New Fire • String and Wind Ensemble

Easter Sunday, April 16th at 9am • 11am • 7pm . . . . . **Celebration of the Resurrection**
The Rev. Troy Perry, preaching • David Raleigh and his Little/Big Band • Guest Musicians and more!

Easter Sunday Services: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 7 p.m.
Rev. Troy Perry, preaching

Metropolitan Community Church of New York
446 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018

Sylvia's Place Spawns a Network of Shelters Around the City for Homeless LGBTQ Youths

From the moment one longtime dream began to come true with the opening of a shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth in MCCNY's church basement almost four years ago, there has always been another, bolder dream: to reach out and enlist other churches—predominantly heterosexual churches—to provide additional emergency shelter space for use when **Sylvia's Place** at MCCNY is full to capacity, and to provide full-time facilities where—in the words of a contributor—"these young people can get on the road to self-respect, employment and independence." MCCNY's Pastor **Rev. Pat Bumgardner** enunciated the dream in stark terms to 400 people at a fund-raiser in 2002 when she declared that if every house of worship in NYC would take in as many youths each night as MCCNY did, there would be no more homeless queer kids left to sleep and suffer and perhaps die abandoned on the streets.

Thanks to the extraordinary outreach and organizational efforts of several members and friends of MCCNY, this dream too has now started to become reality. **Peggy Borgstede & Kathy Green**, MCCNY members who reside in Yonkers, and **Dr. Mina Perry** deserve credit for making it happen.

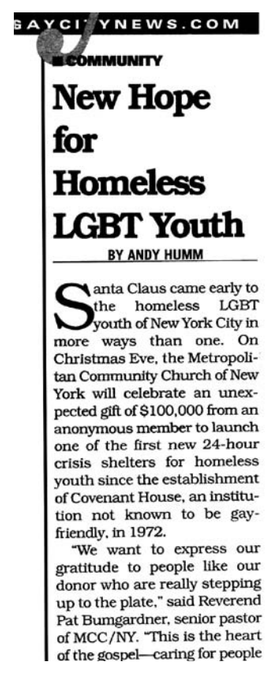
Through their hard work, the **New York Interfaith Task Force for LGBTQ Homeless Youth** was founded last September, began organizing outreach sessions and community meetings, and now has been incorporated. At press time, six churches have joined the LGBTQ Task Force, including Lutheran, Episcopal and Methodist congregations in Manhattan that accept the overflow from Sylvia's Place. And one of those six churches—St. Andrew's Episcopal in Astoria, Queens—has opened a full-time shelter where youths who have maxed out their 90-day limit at Sylvia's Place may stay for 6 to 12 months while receiving assistance in finding employment and permanent housing. **Kate Barnhart**, the Director of Sylvia's Place, is temporarily also serving as the start-up Director of the shelter in Astoria, which is called Carmen's Place.

The shelter at St. Andrew's is separate and distinct from the ongoing efforts by Sylvia's Place to find suitable space to establish its own full-time, 24/7 transitional housing facilities at an off-site location (since there is no more room in MCCNY's building).

Spring 2006

MCC NY Your Spiritual Center
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NEW YORK

The Query Newsletter
Metropolitan Community Church of New York
Church of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People Open to All



SAYCITYNEWS.COM

COMMUNITY

New Hope for Homeless LGBT Youth

BY ANDY HUMM

Santa Claus came early to the homeless LGBT youth of New York City in more ways than one. On Christmas Eve, the Metropolitan Community Church of New York will celebrate an unexpected gift of $100,000 from an anonymous member to launch one of the first new 24-hour crisis shelters for homeless youth since the establishment of Covenant House, an institution not known to be gay-friendly, in 1972.

"We want to express our gratitude to people like our donor who are really stepping up to the plate," said Reverend Pat Bumgardner, senior pastor of MCC/NY. "This is the heart of the gospel—caring for people

***PEGGY BORGSTEDE** (at right in photo) with her partner **Kathy Green** moments after Peggy addressed 450 people at the Queens LGBT Winter Pride Dinner on February 11th.*

Peggy told the event about MCCNY and Sylvia's Place and about the Interfaith Task Force for LGBTQ Homeless Youth. Her speech—following remarks to the dinner by dignitaries such as City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and State Senator Tom Duane—was warmly received by the crowd and typified the tremendous outreach effort that she and her fellow volunteers have undertaken to increase community support for homeless LGBTQ youth. *(Query photos)*

After her speech at the Queens Pride dinner, Peggy was greeted by well-wishers including **Dirk McCall** *(at left)*, president of the **Stonewall Democratic Club** of New York, who successfully lobbied the City Council to provide greatly increased funding for homeless LGBTQ youth services including a **$400,000** appropriation for the off-site expansion of Sylvia's Place.

Peggy was quoted at length in NYC's LGBT media when an anonymous private gift of **$100,000** to MCCNY and its Sylvia's Place Homeless Youth Services made front-page news in December *(at left, from Gay City News)*. See page 2 for more on **The Anonymous Donor**. →

The Pastor's Easter Message

Rev. Pat Bumgardner

Easter 2006

"There is no need to be afraid...." Mark 16

Jesus had to rise from the dead.... John 20

Dear Friends:

The words of Mark's sixteenth chapter will be read this year as we light the new fire and join in the ancient tradition of re-telling the history of salvation, before celebrating the Resurrection on Easter Sunday with the Gospel of John, the twentieth chapter.

There is no need to be afraid.
Jesus had to rise....

I can't help thinking about all the messages that run counter to those proclamations, especially when it comes to Queer people. —The world, from the death squads of Iran to the persecutory policies of Nigeria and Uganda, to the corridors of this nation where Queer people still remain unprotected from job discrimination {ENDA has yet to pass.}, still cannot immigrate as relational partners, still can be summarily dismissed from military service {DADT remains in place.}, still must hope and pray that other human beings from health care professionals to extended family will recognize and honor our relationships and households—the world gives a very different message from that of the Gospel. Fear and the temptation to believe more in the threat of loss than the promise that we as a people not only will, but must rise up, are messages deeply ingrained and frequently reiterated in our world.

Thirty-eight years ago, God raised up a prophet to counter those death-dealing messages with a proclamation of hope and truth. The Rev. Troy Perry came preaching a simple, yet life-renewing message: God loves all people.

Today that is the message that is raising up the movement for equality and justice with defiant and defining Queer Pride movements all over Eastern Europe. It is the message breathing life into our efforts to bring MCC to Nigeria and Malaysia. It is the message behind our ministries right here at home, from expanding our services to homeless Queer youth to spurring the battle to win full equality, including marriage.

Never has there been a more critical time in history than now for that message of universal love—that message that we as a people not only can but must rise up—to prevail. No less than the coming of the Reign of God, a reign of peace and promise, a reign of hope and healing, a reign of equality and justice for all depends upon it.

There is no need to be afraid. God is with us—always has been, always will be. And that's the kind of message that can lift us all up.

I hope you will join MCCNY and your family of faith in marking Holy Week and celebrating Easter. This year we will introduce a meditative Taize service on Wednesday of Holy Week, followed by a footwashing ceremony and service of anointing on Holy Thursday. Good Friday we will welcome back into our pulpit, the Founder of Metropolitan Community Churches, The Rev. Troy D. Perry and shout for joy with The Lavender Light Gospel Choir. On Holy Saturday, you are invited to join in our Annual Awards Banquet at 3pm, where we will recognize the pioneering efforts for equality of both Senator Tom Duane and Assemblyperson Danny O'Donnell. Following the banquet, we will commemorate the ancient Easter Vigil Liturgy at 7pm. And on Easter, MCCNY will celebrate the Resurrection at 9am, 11am and 7pm with the preaching of Rev. Perry and the music of David Raleigh and the Little/Big Band.

With love,

Rev. Pat

Wave after wave of applause rolled through the full house at MCCNY'S CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE when Pastor Bumgardner announced **THE ANONYMOUS DONOR'S** holiday gift of $100,000 to the church and its **Sylvia's Place Homeless Youth Services** (the shelter that spawned the **NY Interfaith Task Force for LGBTQ Homeless Youth**). Few in that Christmas Eve congregation knew that The Anonymous Donor, a legendary figure often mentioned but rarely seen, was sitting incognito in their midst.

The *Query* has reported that The Anonymous Donor contributed with "such generosity over the decades" to everything from MCCNY's Food Pantry and Sylvia's Place to the acquisition of the church building itself—"our anonymous Angel of Mercy…made it possible for this community of faith to have its own home," wrote Rev. Pat in The *Query*.

Gay City News has reported that The Anonymous Donor has contributed notably to LGBTQ youth causes ever since he "provided the seed money" to open the **Hetrick-Martin Institute** (precursor of **Harvey Milk High School**) in 1983 and, on the other end of the age spectrum, that he gave the largest single donation received by **SAGE** (Seniors Active in a Gay Environment). In a remarkable first, *Gay City News* published a picture *(below)* of The Anonymous Donor. It was March 1, 2006 at the opening of the full-time homeless LGBT youth shelter in Queens, part of his life's dream come true. The Anonymous Donor's name was not published.

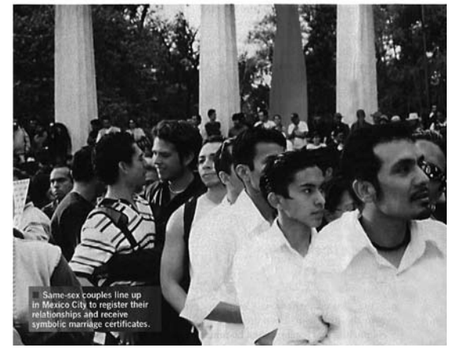
A celebration of the opening of an LGBT youth shelter at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Astoria included five of the women instrumental in making it happen—Peggy Borgstede, Dr. Mina Perry, Dee Johnson, Kathy Green, and Kate Barnhart—pictured here with one of the facility's donors.

GAY CITY NEWS

Valentine's Day Demands for Marriage Equality in Many Cities

An Annual Reminder and a Countdown to Something Bigger

THE ADVOCATE
REPORT



Same-sex couples line up in Mexico City to register their relationships and receive symbolic marriage certificates.

MEXICO CITY: *Throngs gather in the city's central plaza to demand same-sex marriage licenses. (photo from the Advocate newsmagazine).*

HARTFORD: *MCC clergy and lay people demonstrate at City Hall. (Associated Press photo)*

In the 1960s, a handful of activists including **Dr. Frank Kameny** and **Randy Wicker** (who eulogized **Sylvia Rivera** from MCCNY's pulpit in 2002) picketed each July 4th at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The protests were called the **"Annual Reminder"** that LGBT citizens lacked all fundamental human rights—but historians say they were also a **"Countdown"** to the June 1969 Stonewall Riots that ignited the modern LGBT Liberation Movement. Likewise, the Valentine's Day protests every year by MCCNY and **Marriage Equality/NY** at the City Clerk's office—along with similar actions at City Halls across the United States and in Mexico City—serve as an Annual Reminder that LGBT people still lack the hundreds of legal rights and benefits that marriage confers upon heterosexuals. And these actions are also a Countdown to a much bigger event: **Rev. Pat Bumgardner** made clear that if there is no justice from New York state's highest court or the State Legislature within the next year, our community's impatience will be uncontainable and Valentine's Day 2007 will see a dramatic escalation in tactics—including civil disobedience.

NEW YORK: *Rev. Pat Bumgardner solemnized the same-sex marriage of Deacon Lucky Michaels, 26, & Billy Siegfried, 28, at the Marriage License Bureau of the City Clerk's office.*

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You can join more than 1,300 other people who receive *the QUERY Newsletter* totally FREE (and without obligation or commitment of any kind!) four times a year by clipping out this form and sending it to:

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Volunteer staff of The QUERY Newsletter

Editor ..... **Joe Kennedy**

Graphic Design & Layout Editor ..... **Les LaRue**

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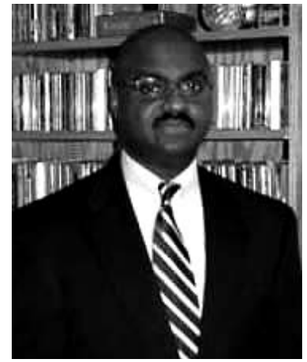
Metropolitan Community Church of New York
446 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10018 USA
Phone 212 629-7440 www.mccny.org

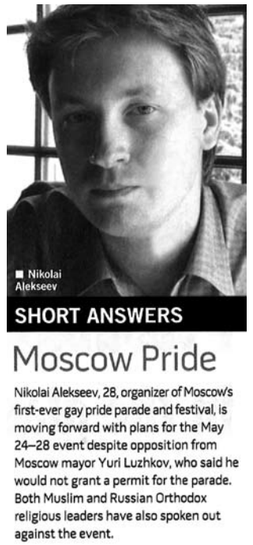
Sunday Worship Services at 9 a.m. (traditional), 11 a.m. (celebration), and 7 p.m. (praise & worship)

On TV in Manhattan: Sundays 8:30 a.m., Time Warner channel 57, RCN channel 112

MCCNYer Gets Denominational Post



It's a feather in MCCNY's cap that a member of this congregation, **Marvin Bagwell** (*at right*), has been appointed to a seat on the Board of Administration (BOA) of our worldwide, predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination. The BOA is the secular-affairs counterpart of the Board of Elders. For many years Marvin served as a Deacon at MCCNY and was especially active in his outreach to NYC's LGBT **leather community**. When former Mineshaft manager Wally Wallace died, Deacon Marvin arranged for his memorial service at MCCNY that drew an overflow crowd. Marvin, a prominent corporate attorney, graduated from Harvard College magna cum laude and from Harvard Law School.



Special Easter Collection for Eastern European LGBTs

The collapse of Communist dictatorship has not meant freedom for LGBT people in the former "Evil Empire," as Moscow activists like Nikolai Alekseev *(at left)* can attest. The governments in power continue virulent repression, but the activists will not be silenced. **Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson**, Moderator of our worldwide, predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination, has asked that a special collection be taken up on Easter Sunday to support the social justice advocates— and establish MCC churches in Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Moldova. Across Eastern Europe, Rev. Wilson says, "MCC is known as 'the church that supports human rights."

Holidays and Candles

Congregants at Christmas Eve pass the flame from candle to candle before singing "Silent Night/Noche de Paz."

Newest MCC Elder Speaks on Dangers of Crystal Meth

Rev. Dr. Jim Mitulski, former Pastor of MCC San Francisco, is the newest member of the Board of Elders of our worldwide, predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination. He is a leader in the MCC denomination's response to the crystal meth crisis in the gay community. As a Guest Preacher at MCCNY in December, he delivered an exceptionally knowledgeable sermon that touched on the appeal of the circuit party scene and the dangers posed by crystal meth.

From 1996 to 1999, **Kendall Zellner** was a member and a friendly and outgoing congregant every week at MCCNY along with his partner Don Roofener. Then they moved to Seattle *(Kendall in Seattle, at right)*. On the morning of January 3rd, Kendall passed away peacefully in his sleep as Don held his hand. Don wrote to Rev. Pat: "He always regarded your sermons as the best. You were his favorite pastor…He felt at home at MCCNY."

Deacon Michelle Hosts Weekly Youth Group Meetings;

Participants Come from Sylvia's Place Shelter and Beyond

By Kirsten Abrams

"Prodigy" is the name of MCCNY's Youth ministry, headed by Deacon and Candidate for the ordained ministry Michelle Slack. Prodigy began as a way to offer emotional and spiritual support for and guidance to the residents of Sylvia's Place, MCCNY's shelter for homeless queer-identified youth.

To draw a larger number of members, Prodigy expanded to include homeless or otherwise displaced queer youth outside of Sylvia's Place. Members of the **Y.E.S.** (Youth Empowerment Services) program at the LGBT Community Center have added to Prodigy's members, as have young adults who regularly attend Worship Services at MCCNY. Word of mouth and ads at the Center and at Hetrick-Martin have increased attendance.

A group of up to 12 members, Prodigy serves several functions at its weekly meetings (Fridays at 8 p.m. at the church). Some recent sessions focused on liturgical seasons and their significance for our community of faith; Bible studies; what MCC holds to be true about God and Scriptures, and worship. Members talk openly about their fears—of church, clergy, faith, prayer, etc.

Flexibility is a core component of the meetings, as Deacon Michelle maintains a commitment to address complex issues in the lives of the members. As they share experience from their daily lives, discussion is broadened to shed light on issues such as death, relationships and illness. Prodigy's meetings include a Lenten study group called "A Grown-Up Faith," modeled after lessons created by The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, MCC's Moderator.

Some Prodigy members participate in the music ministry at MCCNY and sing on a regular basis in the church choir.

Prodigy hopes to increase attendance at meetings. The arts play a key role in many of their lives, so there has been conversation about doing an Arts & Spirituality series. **Ray Gordon**, Artistic Director for the **Lavender Light Gospel Choir**, has agreed to do a Gospel workshop in April.

Deacon Michelle visits young people in the hospital or who are incarcerated. She is also in conversation with PFLAG-NY about developing a Speakers Bureau geared toward issues of sexuality and religion in the lives of young adults and their families.

Asked about Prodigy's goal, Deacon Michelle said, "To have a learning experience that is fun for everyone; the more they get to know one another, the more that actually happens. Many of them come into Youth Group with uncertainty and mistrust about what they're going to get, having had terribly painful experiences at other churches. So it takes time for folks to feel like they can let their guard down and truly be themselves. Many of us have waited for so long to get to do that."

NEW *QUERY* WRITER: Kirsten Abrams *(at left in photo)* & Jane Bishop became members of MCCNY within the last year and joined the church choir. The *Query* is pleased to welcome Kirsten as the newest contributing writer on our volunteer staff.

PFLAG Parents Commend MLK Interfaith Celebration

After MCCNY hosted the 9th annual LGBT Interfaith Celebration of **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**'s Birthday in January, Rev. Pat Bumgardner received a letter from a congregant's parents who had been there: "We were greatly moved by the music, the sense of community, and the powerful oratory. Your sermon was riveting and we applaud you for your efforts."

Besides Rev. Pat, speakers included **Rev. Jeff Haskins** of Unity Fellowship Church of New York (**Archbishop Zachary Jones** of Unity Fellowship Church was also in attendance), **Rabbi Ayelet F. Cohen**, Assistant Rabbi of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah; **Rev. Gale Jones** of Renewed Life Ministries (a congregation that worships in MCCNY's sanctuary every Sunday at 3 p.m.); and **Brendan Fay** of the Lavender & Green Alliance. Music was provided by the **Lavender Light Gospel Choir** and musicians from the participating congregations. Representatives of other faiths and organizations were introduced including **Axios** (LGBT Eastern Orthodox Christians).

With a standing-room-only crowd packing the 250-seat sanctuary and a strong spirit of unity and solidarity evident, veteran observers called it the most successful LGBT Martin Luther King Celebration yet. It was organized by MCCNY's full-time Assistant Pastor, **Rev. Dr. Edgard Danielsen-Morales**.

GLSEN and MCC Team Up to End School Harassment Nationally

Denominational Headquarters Credits Rev. Pat for the Initiative

The churches of our predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination that operate in 237 cities in the USA and **GLSEN** (the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network) have teamed up to try to end harassment and bullying of LGBT students in schools across the nation.

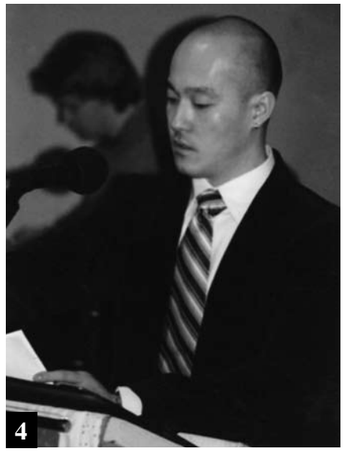
MCC and GLSEN are sponsoring "Training of Teachers" sessions for educators and community-based organizers to give them additional tools and resources to make schools safer and more affirming for LGBT children. The first session was held March 3rd at NYU with 90 registered participants. **Rev. Dr. Cindi Love**, MCC's Executive Director, pronounced it a very successful event and a model for at least seven more sessions to be held around the country over the next 18 months. Dr. Love said Rev. Pat Bumgardner was "instrumental in creating this opportunity for MCC" and GLSEN by introducing leaders of the two organizations to each other.

London Calling

Rev. Pressley Sutherland *(right)*, Pastor of MCC North London in the U.K., and his congregation undertook a ministry to provide shelter for the homeless of London this winter. This will come as no surprise to those who remember Rev. Pressley's service as Assistant Pastor of MCCNY years ago when "generosity" was his watchword.

Rev. Pressley tells The *Query* that after reading the lectionary passage on the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46) at the end of November, he challenged his congregation of about 75 people to put the lesson into action. The result was MCC North London joining with six other churches in a cold-weather coalition for the homeless. Each church is given a night of the week to provide three shifts of volunteers—evening, overnight and morning—to operate the shelter. Rev. Pressley tells The *Query* that on the first night it was his church's turn, Jan. 2nd, 17 volunteers from his congregation showed up: "Our first evening was hard work and there are particulars to iron out. But, there is nothing quite like sitting through the night silently praying and watching over a church hall full of homeless guests sleeping on air mattresses in warmth and safety. In many ways, I think our building has rarely been more of a church than on this night."

In other news from the U.K., **Rev. Kerri Messner** *(below)*, who served her Candidacy for the ordained ministry at MCCNY and was ordained here on Pentecost Sunday 2002, was installed as Pastor of **MCC Edinburgh** in Scotland on January 21st.

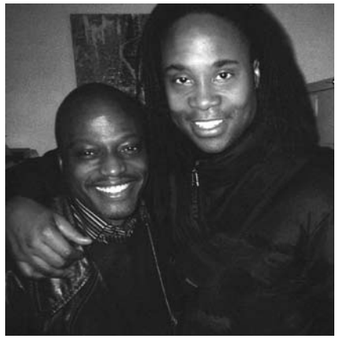


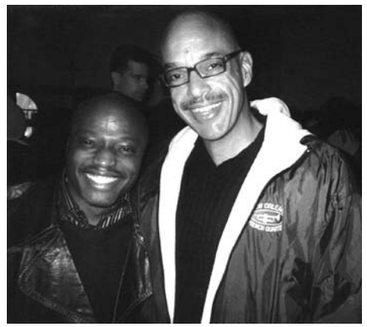
New to Our Pulpit

Boon Lin Ngeo *(left)*, seminarian at Boston's Episcopal Divinity School, preached on Jan. 29th as MCCNY's Asian-Pacific Islander ministry celebrated the Lunar New Year. His compelling exegesis on Genesis chapter 2 should forever silence those who in ignorance of the Bible's true meaning and intent say "God created Adam & Eve, not Adam & Steve."

Margret Hofmeister *(right)*, seminarian at Union Theological Seminary, made her debut on March 12th and described the greater-than-expected satisfaction she derived from working as a Habitat for Humanity volunteer building houses for the needy in West Virginia.

David Raleigh and His Famous Friends





At left: David Raleigh, band leader and pianist/vocalist at MCCNY's 11 a.m. Sunday Worship Services, is seen with superstar **Billy Porter** (whose "coming out affirmation on Logo has become a cult classic," says *Clik* magazine) after David enlisted Billy to sing as a surprise musical guest at the 11 a.m. Service recently.

At right: Only statutory term limits could drive popular former City Councilmember **Phil Reed** from office. But Phil is still an active voice and fighter for social justice in NYC—and, having been the first elected official to become a member of MCCNY, he continues to worship on Sundays at this church.

Our Newest Congregants

Tim Carter and Andre Thompson with their twins, Eli and Lucas.

Rev. Franc Perry and former MCCNY Board member Jeff Bornheimer with their children Ruby and the newly arrived Jack (David Jackson Perry).

St. Pat's for All Parade in Queens

MCCNYers line up to march in the inclusive St. Patrick's Parade in Queens on March 5th (*below right*). Mayor **Michael Bloomberg**, City Council Speaker **Christine Quinn** (the Grand Marshall), and Queens LGBT community leader **Danny Dromm** prepare to lead the parade (*below left*). The inclusive parade, organized by Brendan Fay, serves as a rebuke to Manhattan's St. Patrick's Parade whose organizers continue to spout ignorant and hateful bigotry as they ban open LGBT participation. **WBAI** radio interviewed a representative of MCCNY at the Queens parade about the church's active commitment to social justice and its shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth. *(Query photos)*